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JOURNEY TO THE EAST
PART 2 OF 4
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Tracy Yardley
Hunzeker

Journey to the East

Welcome to the planet Mobius – a world beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Sonic has come to the Dragon Kingdom to break the Iron Dominion's control of the region! He's answered a summons by the Yagyu, but instead has found - -

Part Two: High Price for Rich Nights

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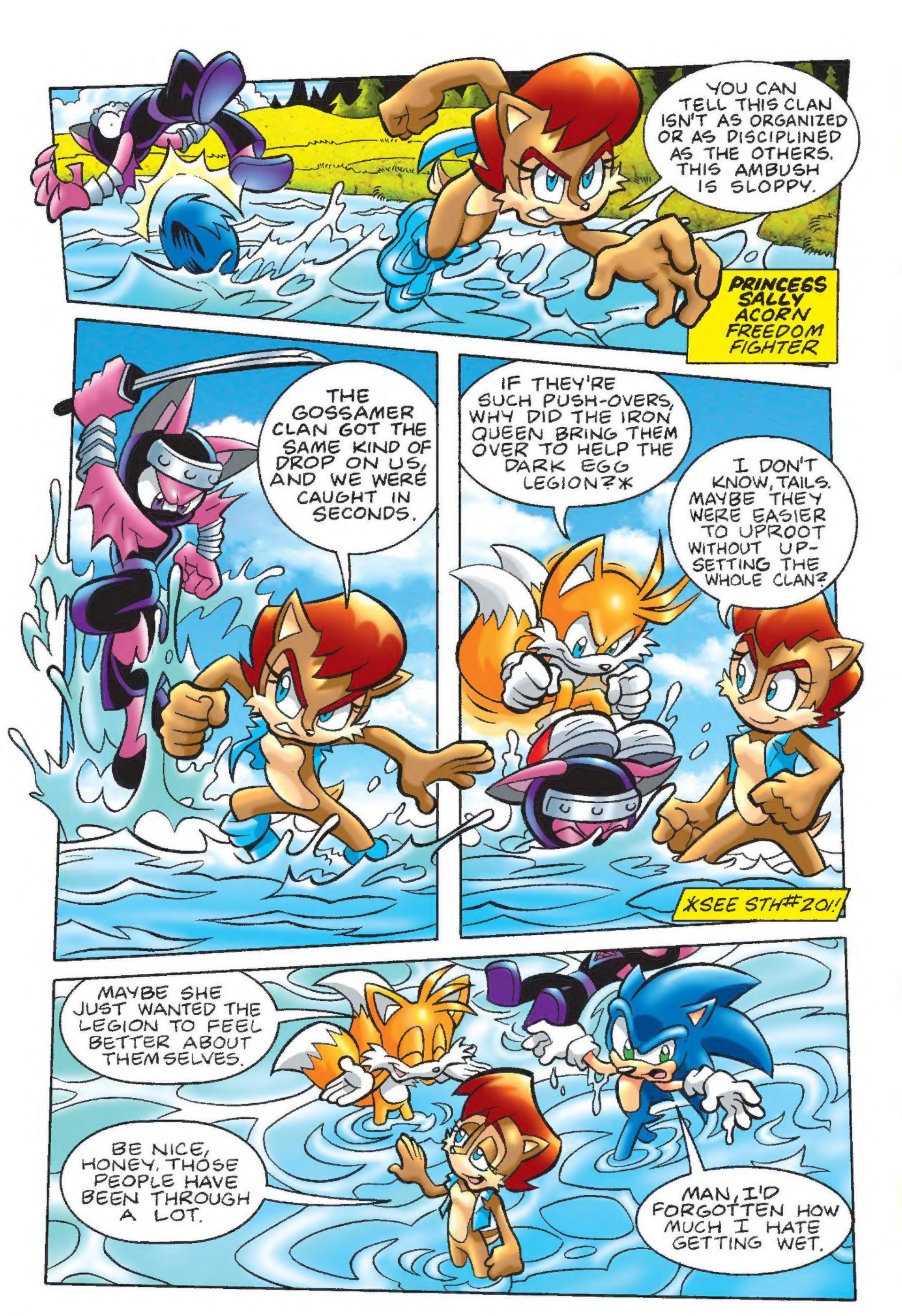
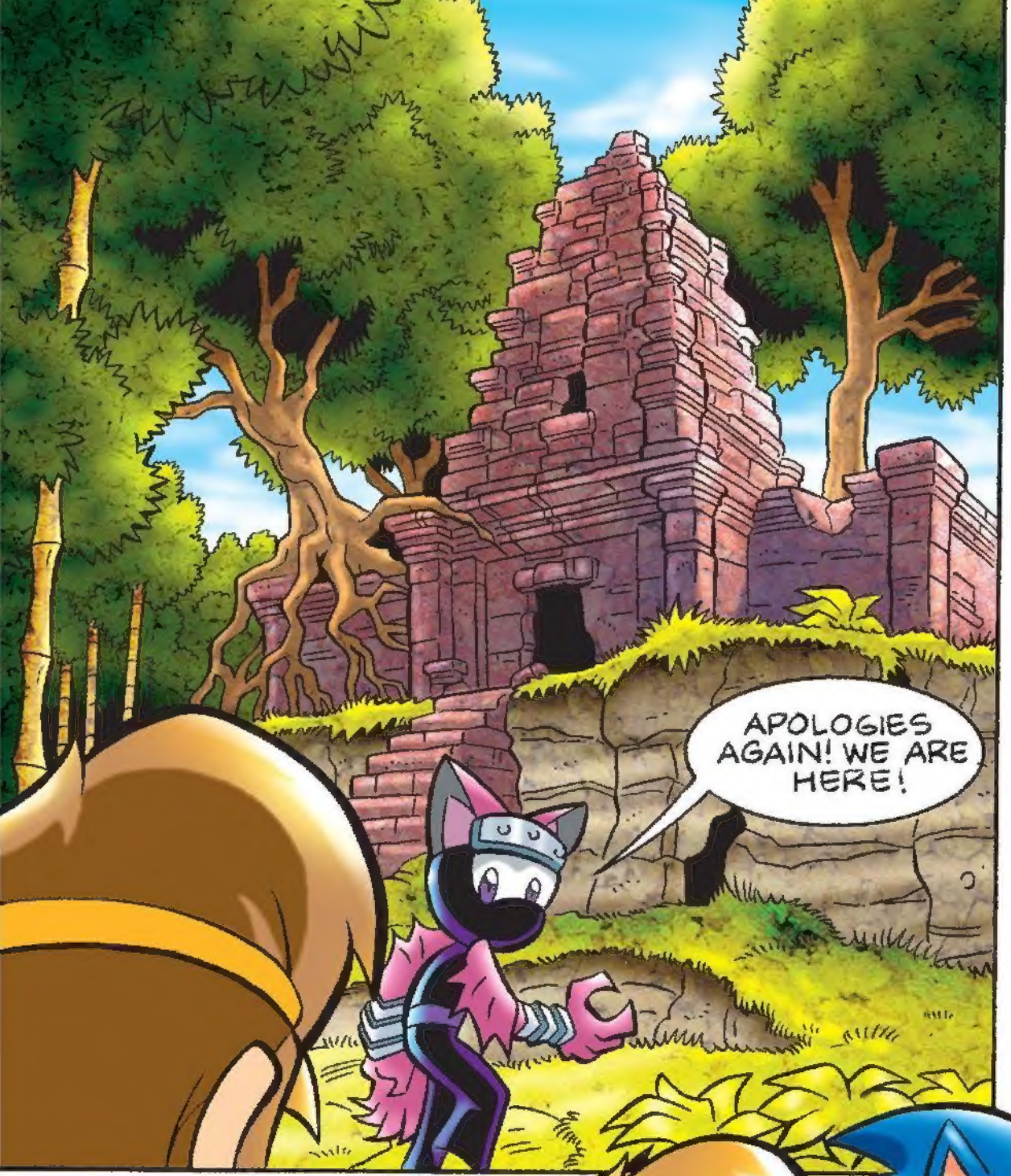
HISSSSS!
I'M STILL LEARNING THE LOCAL LINGO...
WHOP
SPLASH
...BUT I THINK THAT MEANS "BEAT THE SNOT OUT OF ME!"
STINKING YAGYU SCUM! I KNEW WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED THEIR SUMMONS!*
*SEE LAST ISSUE!
WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT HAPPENS TO BACK-STABBING THIEVES AROUND HERE!
YEAH!
CLONK!


YOU CAN TELL THIS CLAN ISN'T AS ORGANIZED OR AS DISCIPLINED AS THE OTHERS. THIS AMBUSH IS SLOPPY.
PRINCESS SALLY ACORN FREEDOM FIGHTER
THE GOSSAMER CLAN GOT THE SAME KIND OF DROP ON US, AND WE WERE CAUGHT IN SECONDS.
IF THEY'RE SUCH PUSH-OVERS, WHY DID THE IRON QUEEN BRING THEM OVER TO HELP THE DARK EGG LEGION?*
I DON'T KNOW, TAILS. MAYBE THEY WERE EASIER TO UPROOT WITHOUT UP-SETTING THE WHOLE CLAN?
*SEE STH#201!
MAYBE SHE JUST WANTED THE LEGION TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES.
BE NICE, HONEY. THOSE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THROUGH A LOT.
MAN, I'D FORGOTTEN HOW MUCH I HATE GETTING WET.

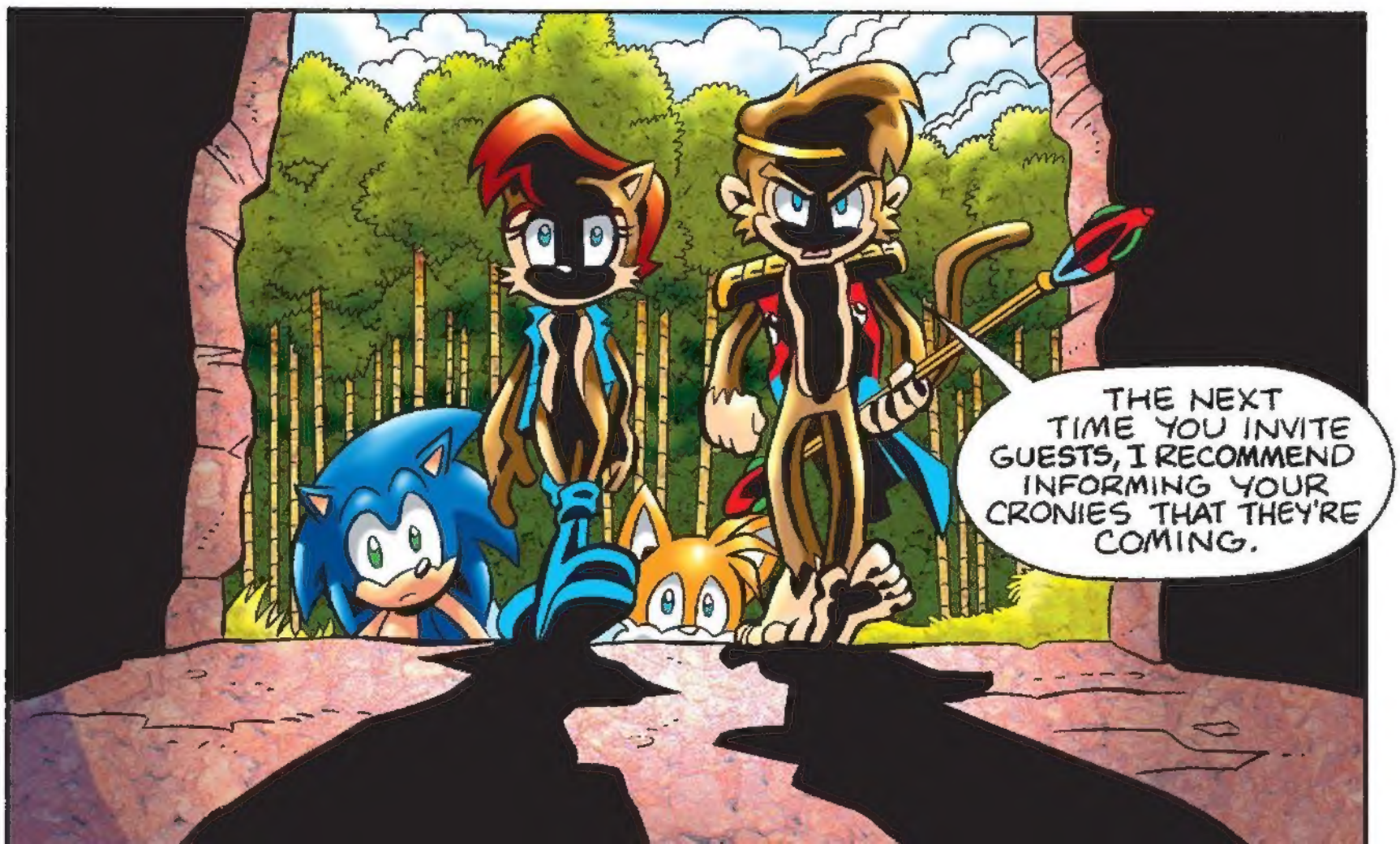
CLANK
NOW--ARE YOU GOING TO FULFILL THE INVITATION TO MEET WITH YOUR LORD, OR DO I PUT YOU BACK WITH THE REST OF THE POND SCUM?
HISSSS... W--WAIT... YOU'RE THE ONES HE SENT FOR?
DO WE LOOK LIKE LOCALS?
HISSSS! PARDON! PARDON! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST TRAVELERS! SIMPLE ROBBERY! HONEST! HONEST!
JUST SHUT UP AND LEAD THE WAY.

AND SO...
NOT MUCH FURTHER! PROMISSSSE!
KEN...
THE YAGYU CLAN HAS NO BRIDE FOR THEIR HOUSE, RIGHT?
RIGHT. THE IRON DOMINION KILLED THE BRIDE OF RICH NIGHTS AND TOOK THE YAGYU AS THEIR OWN.
I DON'T KNOW, SALLY. IF WE CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS LORD, THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO PLAY IT BY EAR.
DOES THAT MAKE THINGS EASIER OR HARDER FOR US?
WITHOUT A PROPER BRIDE, THEY MAY NOT FALL BACK ON TRADITION, BUT THEY MAY NOT WANT TO GIVE UP THE IRON QUEEN EITHER.


APOLOGIES AGAIN! WE ARE HERE!

COZY.
I THINK THIS WAS A TEMPLE FROM THE OLD DAYS. WHAT THE LOCALS CALL THE "LOST DYNASTY," OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

KEEP ON YOUR TOES, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THEY TRIED ANOTHER AMBUSH.
THEY CAN TRY ALL THEY WANT. I'LL STILL RUN RINGS AROUND THEM.


THE NEXT TIME YOU INVITE GUESTS, I RECOMMEND INFORMING YOUR CRONIES THAT THEY'RE COMING.

OTHERWISE WE MIGHT GET THE WRONG IDEA.

Huhn.

YOU GET THE GOSSAMER CLAN TO ROLL OVER AND ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE HIGH AND MIGHTY? PLEASE.

CURRENT YAGYU LORD REGIONAL BOSS

THE FACT YOU'VE RETURNED MEANS YOU DID NO BETTER AGAINST THE IRON QUEEN OVER THERE THAN YOU DID OVER HERE.

AT LEAST YOU'RE CONSISTENT, I GUESS.

AND WHAT'S WITH ALL THE TOURISTS? ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPRESS US WITH A GROUP OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS YOU *HAVEN'T* BEEN TRICKED INTO DESTROYING?

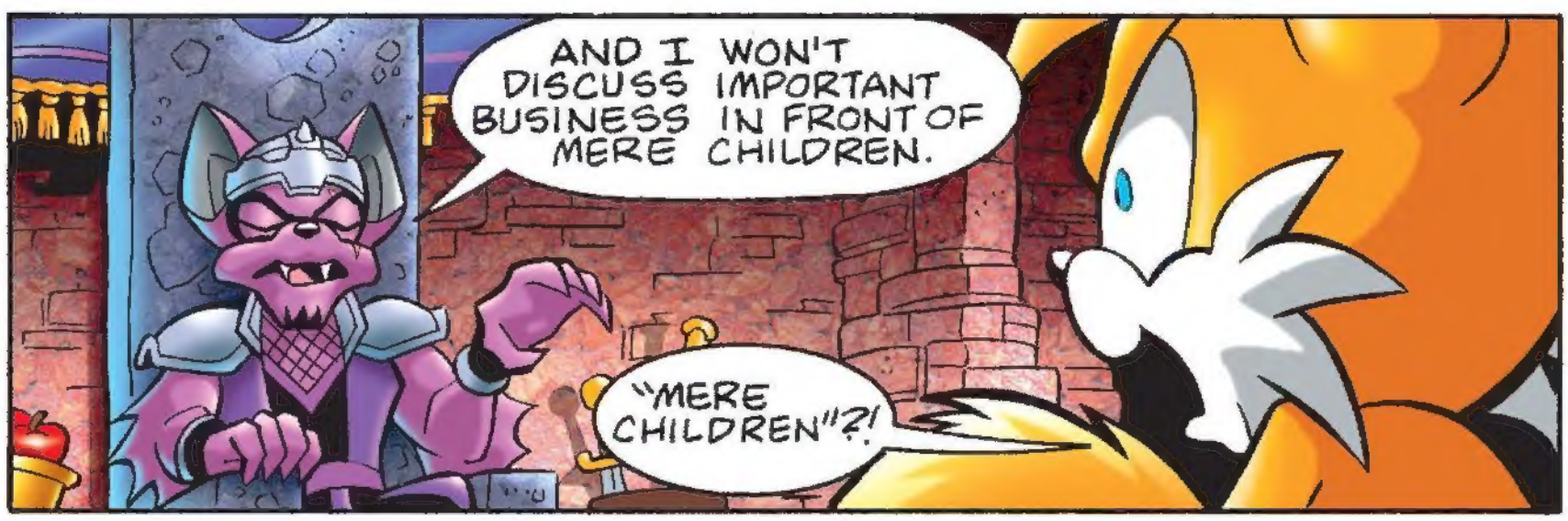
HAHAHAHA

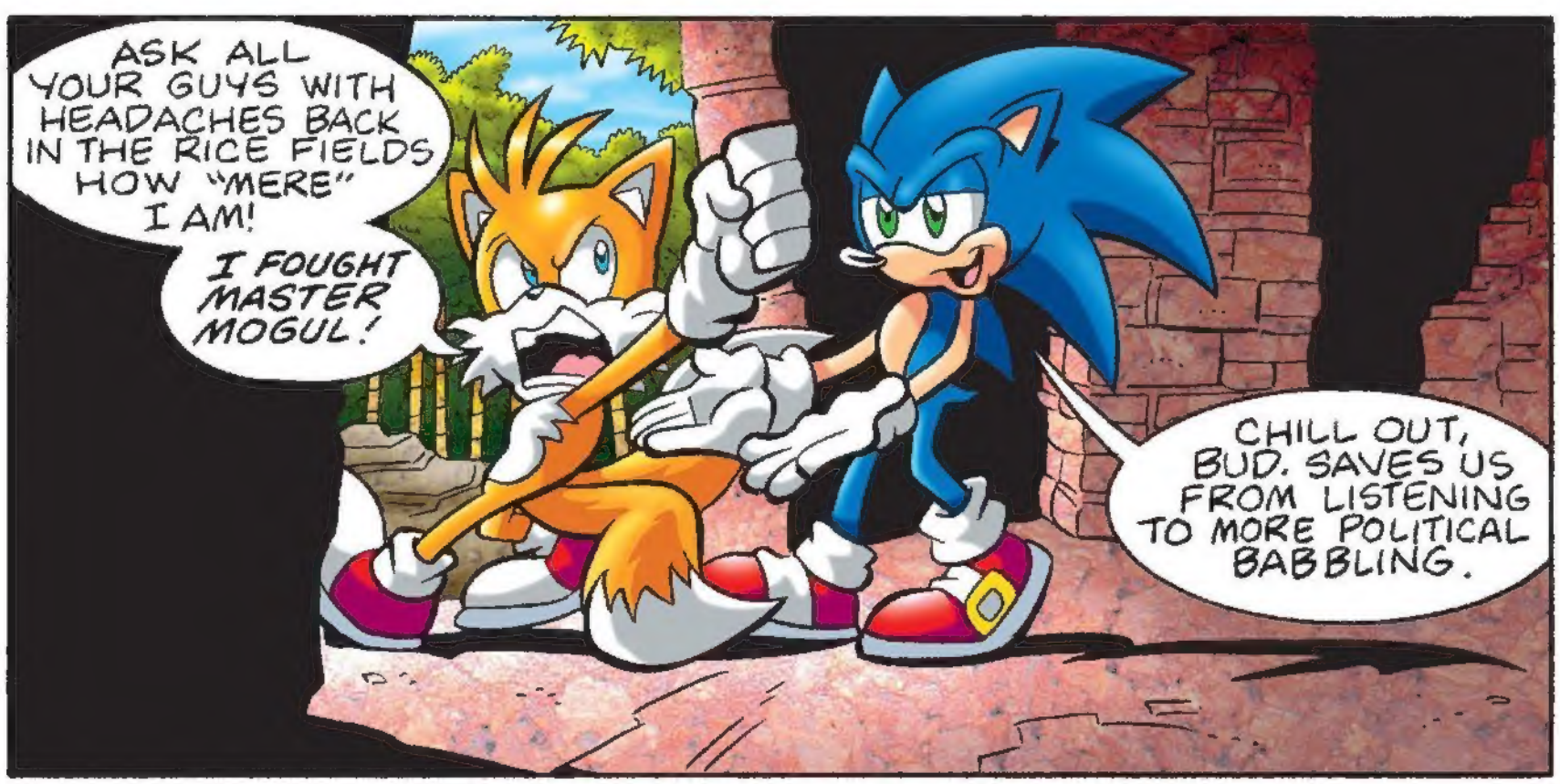
REAL CLASSY, CHIEF.

ALL THAT ASIDE... I'M HERE TO BROKER PEACE BETWEEN YOUR CLAN AND THE FREE PEOPLE OF THE DRAGON KINGDOM...
HOLD IT.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE NEED TO GET OUT OF THE WAY, FIRST.

I'LL MEET WITH THE CROWN PRINCESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ACORN. I'LL EVEN MEET WITH THE--heh-- "KING OF THE FREE PEOPLE."

BUT I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE SONIC THE HEDGEHOG IN MY LAIR.
Nah, I WOULDN'T THINK SO.


AND I WON'T DISCUSS IMPORTANT BUSINESS IN FRONT OF MERE CHILDREN.
"MERE CHILDREN"?!


ASK ALL YOUR GUYS WITH HEADACHES BACK IN THE RICE FIELDS HOW "MERE" I AM!
I FOUGHT MASTER MOGUL!
CHILL OUT, BUD. SAVES US FROM LISTENING TO MORE POLITICAL BABBLING.

HAPPY NOW?
NO, ACTUALLY.
BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, THE DAYS BEFORE THE BRIDES, "YAGYU" MEANT SOMETHING DIFFERENT. WE WERE ASSASSINS, EXPERTS WITH THE BLADE. ONLY AFTER THE BRIDE CONSOLIDATED THE CLAN DID WE STOOP TO THIEVERY TO FEED THE TRADITIONAL TREASURE HORDE...
THOSE HEADY DAYS WITHOUT SOMEONE TELLING US ALL WHAT TO DO. I ENVY THE REGIONAL LORDS OF THOSE DAYS.
I THINK WE JUST GOT OURSELVES SET UP FOR A TRAP.
STAY CALM...

"... MAYBE WE CAN TALK OUR WAY OUT OF THIS YET."
...AND I'VE FOUGHT SWATBOTS, AND EGG PAWNS AND-AND-AND I BUILT THE TORNADO FROM SCRATCH!
MORE THAN ONCE!
DUDE, WILL YOU CHILL OUT? THAT GUY IS A COLOSSAL JERK. WHY ARE YOU GETTING SO BENT OUT OF SHAPE?
I'VE WORKED REALLY HARD TO PROVE I'M JUST AS MUCH A FREEDOM FIGHTER AS EVERYONE ELSE. HE KNOWS WHO YOU ARE, BUT I'M...
MY BEST BUD AND THE ONE GUY I'D PICK TO HAVE MY BACK ANYTIME. YOU'VE DONE MORE IN YOUR SHORT LIFE THAN HE'S EVER GOING TO DO. SO DON'T GET WORKED UP OVER ONE LOW-LIFE.
I DON'T KNOW, BLUE...
HE'S STILL PRETTY HUNG UP OVER THIS LOW-LIFE.

FIONA!
WE WERE WONDERING WHICH ROCK YOU WENT TO HIDE UNDER AFTER THE WHOLE MOEBIUS THING.*
*SEE STH #195
I GOT OUT WHILE THE GETTING WAS GOOD. I KEPT MYSELF BUSY, THOUGH.
YEAH? DOING WHAT?
AND W-WHY ARE YOU IN THE DRAGON KINGDOM?
I'LL TELL IF YOU CAN MANAGE TO CATCH ME.

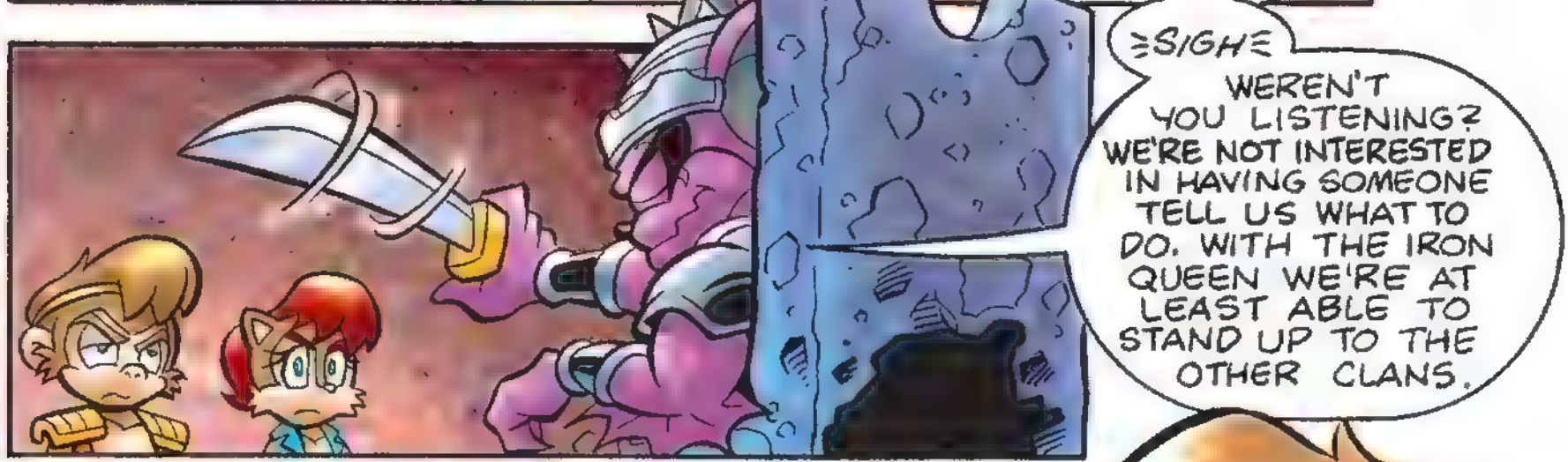
HAHAHA!
C'MON, BOYS! I KNOW YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!
THIS STUFF IS SO THICKLY GROWN TOGETHER, I CAN'T BUILD UP ANY SPEED!
I SHOULD'VE JUST FLOWN US OVER!
I'M DOING JUST FINE. YOU BOYS JUST NEED TO BE A LITTLE MORE--
--FLEXIBLE.
WHOA!
THWACK
OW!

YOU ALRIGHT?
Nrrrgh... SHE'S HURT ME WORSE BEFORE.
THWACK
THAT'S MY MAN. I'LL SCOOT AHEAD AND--
THAT'S IT!
BZZZZZ
THAT GOT HIM!

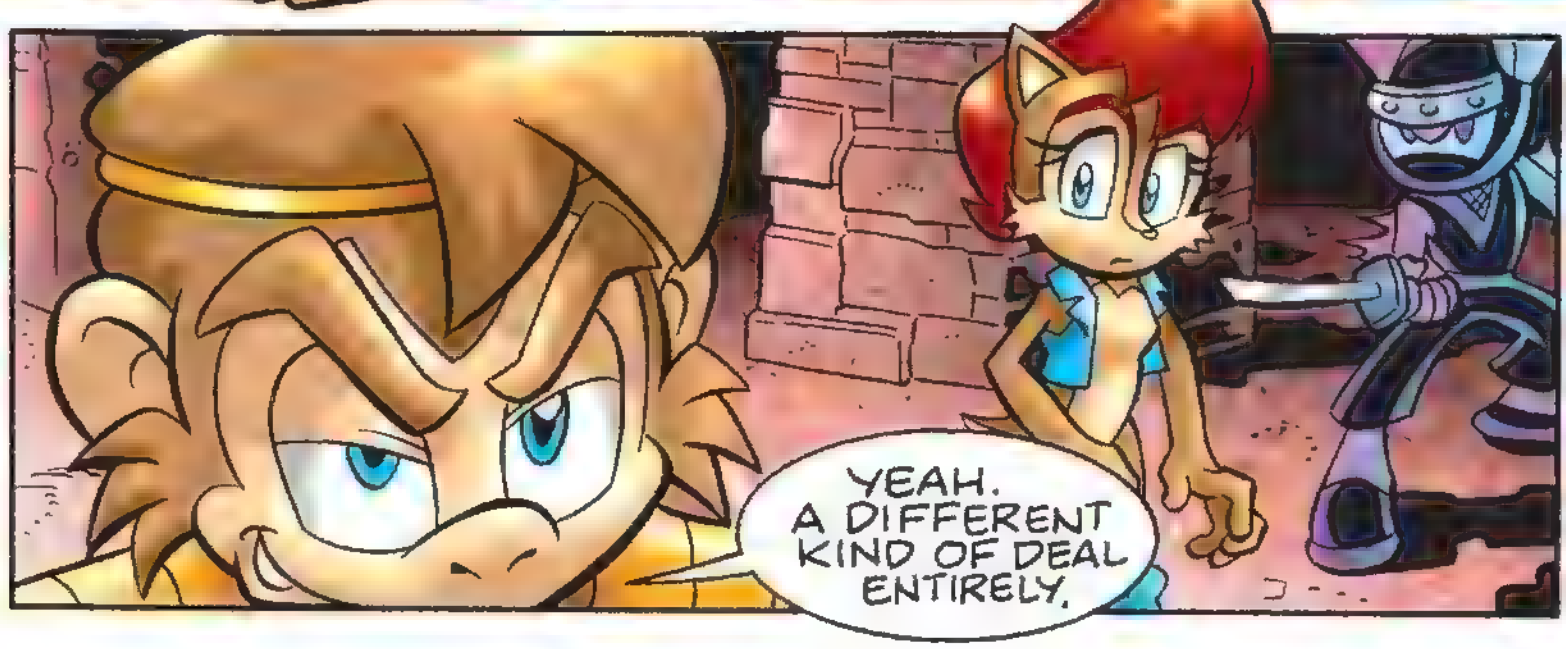
BZZZZZZZ
GOOD CHASE, BLUE. YOU'VE ALMOST GOT ME.
BZZZZZZZP
OH! SO CLOSE!
WHUD
HERE'S SOME INFO AS A CONSOLATION PRIZE: I'M RUNNING WITH THE DESTRUCTIX AGAIN.
SGT. SIMIAN SUPER STRONG SIMIAN
FIONA FOX F.F. TRAITOR
YOU DON'T SAY...

I'M COMING, SONIC!
YOU MAKE THIS TOO EASY, KID.
AUGH!
PREDATOR HAWK AERIAL ACE
I AM GETTING SO TIRED OF DEALING WITH YOU GUYS.
MRGPH!
A BIT OF GRIT SO THE DIRT WILL HURT! WHEE HEE HEE HEE!
FLYING FROG NOT QUITE RIGHT
NOW THAT WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION...
THE DESTRUCTIX MERCENARY TEAM

I THINK WE'RE GETTING DISTRACTED FROM THE BUSINESS AT HAND.
IF YOU REJECT THE IRON QUEEN, YOU'LL BE FREE TO CHOOSE A BRIDE FOR YOUR CLAN THAT YOU LIKE, AND YOU'LL BE RECOGNIZED BY THE KING OF THE FREE PEOPLE.

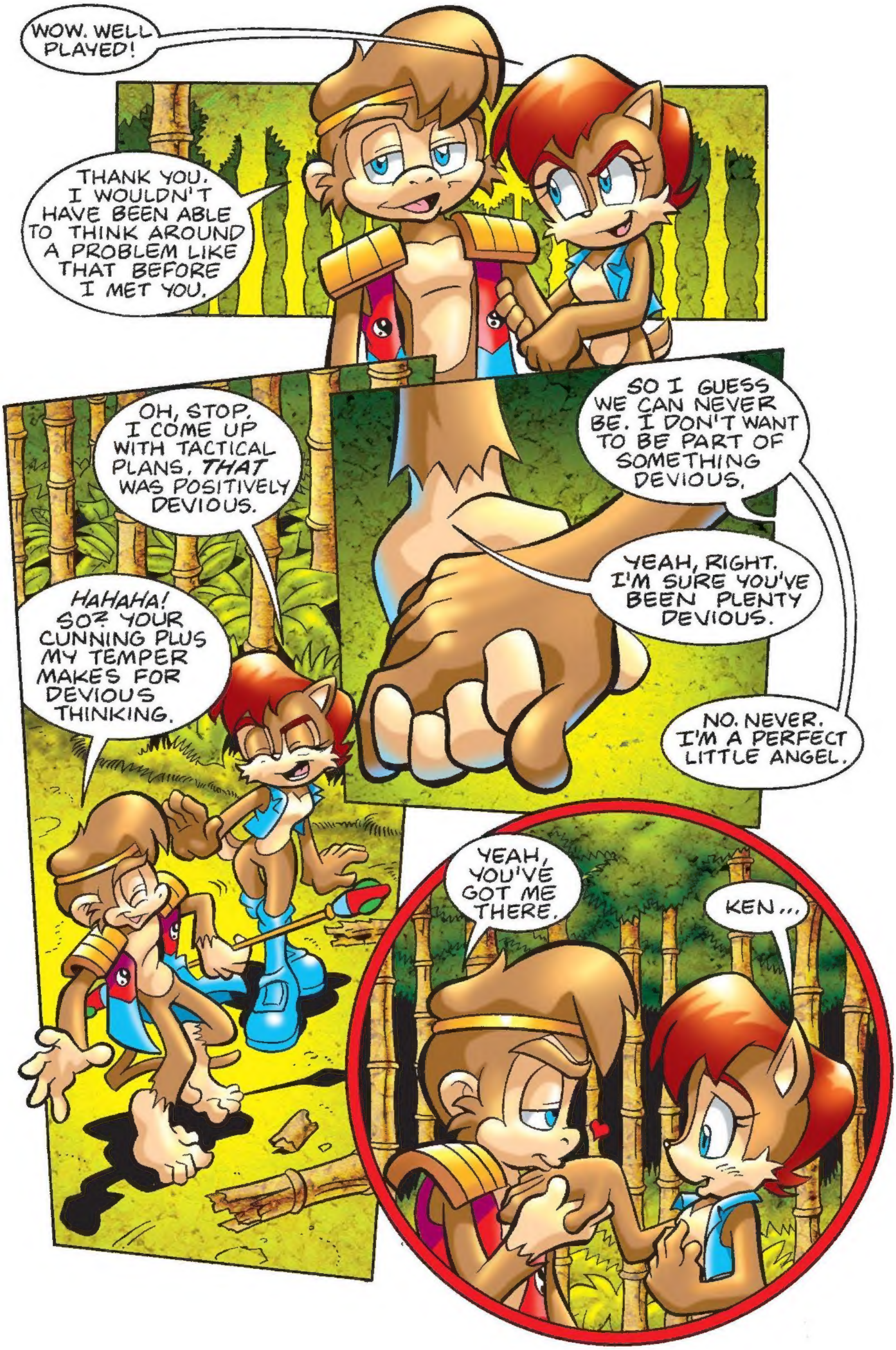

≥SIGH≤
WEREN'T YOU LISTENING? WE'RE NOT INTERESTED IN HAVING SOMEONE TELL US WHAT TO DO. WITH THE IRON QUEEN WE'RE AT LEAST ABLE TO STAND UP TO THE OTHER CLANS.

BUT YOUR PEOPLE ARE BEING USED FOR EVIL!
"EVIL" IS SUBJECTIVE!
SHE...SHE'S THE ONLY ONE PROFITING FROM THIS ARRANGEMENT!
SO WAS THE BRIDE OF RICH NIGHTS. ANYTHING ELSE?


YEAH. A DIFFERENT KIND OF DEAL ENTIRELY.

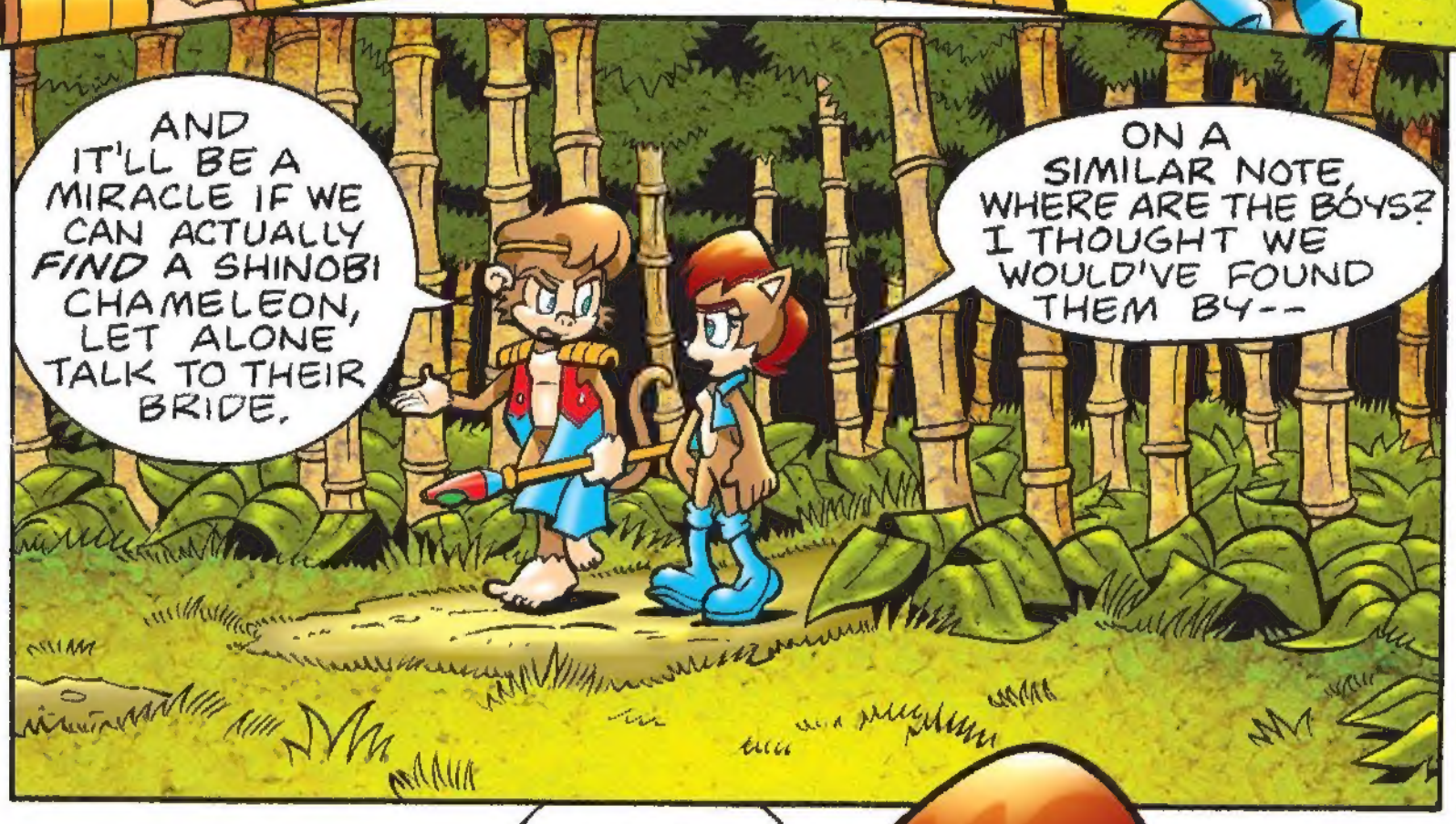
HE SPEAKS! WHAT'S ON YOUR TINY MIND?
REJECT THE IRON DOMINION, REJECT THE BRIDES ALTOGETHER, AND GO BACK TO THE OLD DAYS YOU ENVY SO MUCH.
OH FOR... I'M WASTING MY TIME. YOU AND THE OTHER CLANS WOULD TEAR US APART.
WHY WOULD THEY? YOU'D NO LONGER BE A CLAN AND NO LONGER A THREAT TO THEM. YOU'D BE FREE TO MOVE ABOUT THE DRAGON KINGDOM AND STAKE OUT YOUR CLAIM.
YEAH, BUT THEN WE'D BE "FREE PEOPLE", AND THERE'S NO WAY WE'D ACCEPT YOU AS OUR KING.
WHO SAID YOU'D HAVE TO? I'M JUST A PROTECTOR OF THE PEOPLE. I'M NO MORE THEIR "KING" THAN YOU'RE REALLY MARRIED TO THE "BRIDE".
I'LL BE BUSY KEEPING THE PEACE BETWEEN THE CLANS. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KEEP UP WITH A GROUP OF UNORGANIZED THIEVES?
BACK TO THE OLD REGIONAL LORDS... NO MORE CODES OF CONDUCT OR CEREMONY...
I HAVE YOUR WORD OF HONOR?
YOU DO.
THEN ON MY WORD OF HONOR I SWEAR TO SPREAD THE NEWS. THE YAGYU CLAN IS DONE WITH THIS NONSENSE.
A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.

WHILE I'M GLAD YOU GOT THEM TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE IRON DOMINION, DON'T YOU WORRY THIS IS GOING TO SPREAD LAWLESSNESS TO EVERYONE ELSE?
I THOUGHT OF THAT, BUT KNOWING THESE PEOPLE LIKE I DO, I FIGURE IT WILL BREAK DOWN LIKE THIS-- A THIRD OF THESE GUYS WILL WANT TO GO BACK TO THEIR ANCIENT WAYS...
...ANOTHER THIRD IS GOING TO LIKE THE CUSHY LIFESTYLE THE IRON QUEEN BROUGHT THEM AND WON'T WANT THE GOOD TIMES TO END...
...AND THE REST WILL TRY TO PROFIT FROM THIS ANY WAY THEY CAN! THEY'LL BE SO BUSY FIGHTING EACH OTHER OVER THE SCRAPS, THEY WON'T HAVE THE MANPOWER OR RESOURCES TO BOTHER ANYONE ELSE!


WOW. WELL PLAYED!
THANK YOU. I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO THINK AROUND A PROBLEM LIKE THAT BEFORE I MET YOU.
OH, STOP. I COME UP WITH TACTICAL PLANS, THAT WAS POSITIVELY DEVIOUS.
HAHAHA! SO? YOUR CUNNING PLUS MY TEMPER MAKES FOR DEVIOUS THINKING.
SO I GUESS WE CAN NEVER BE. I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING DEVIOUS.
YEAH, RIGHT. I'M SURE YOU'VE BEEN PLENTY DEVIOUS.
NO. NEVER. I'M A PERFECT LITTLE ANGEL.
YEAH, YOU'VE GOT ME THERE.
KEN...

Ahem
LET'S REMEMBER WE'RE ON A TIME-SENSITIVE MISSION.
RIGHT. WE STILL NEED TO LIBERATE YOUR CITY AND SPEAK WITH TWO MORE CLANS.

DO YOU THINK THEY'LL BE PROBLEMATIC?
VERY. THE RAIJU CLAN IS MORE VIOLENT AND DANGEROUS THAN THE YAGYU EVER WERE.


AND IT'LL BE A MIRACLE IF WE CAN ACTUALLY FIND A SHINOBI CHAMELEON, LET ALONE TALK TO THEIR BRIDE.
ON A SIMILAR NOTE, WHERE ARE THE BOYS? I THOUGHT WE WOULD'VE FOUND THEM BY--

OH MY GOSH! KEN, GET READY!
Um-- RIGHT! WHY? WHO ARE THEY?

NOW THAT WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, THERE'S SOMETHING WE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS.
What is there to discuss with a bunch of villains?! Next time it's Team Sonic vs. The Destructix! It's all-out war on the Raiju Clan!
Don't miss the explosive excitement in Part Three of "Journey to the East"!

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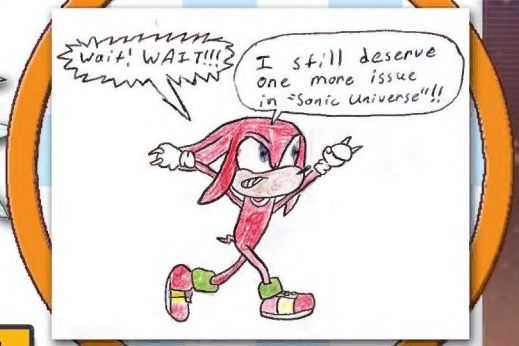

by Lee Ann W. from North Carolina

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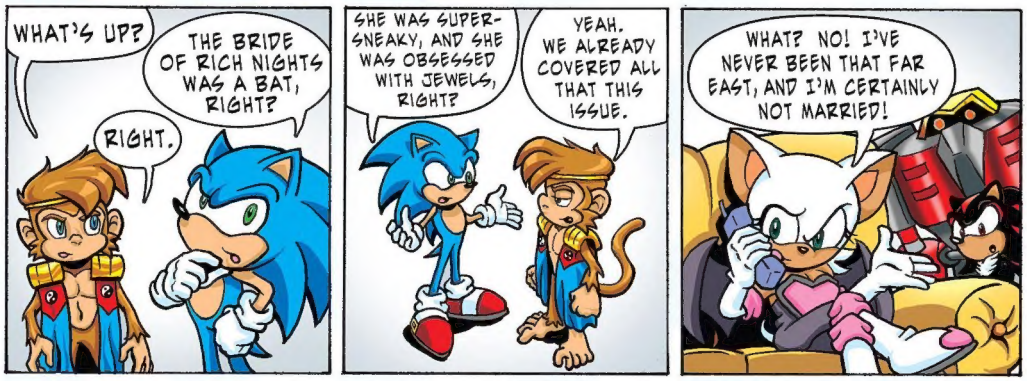

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